Chapter 9: As Normal as Possible

By Masaoki Shindo

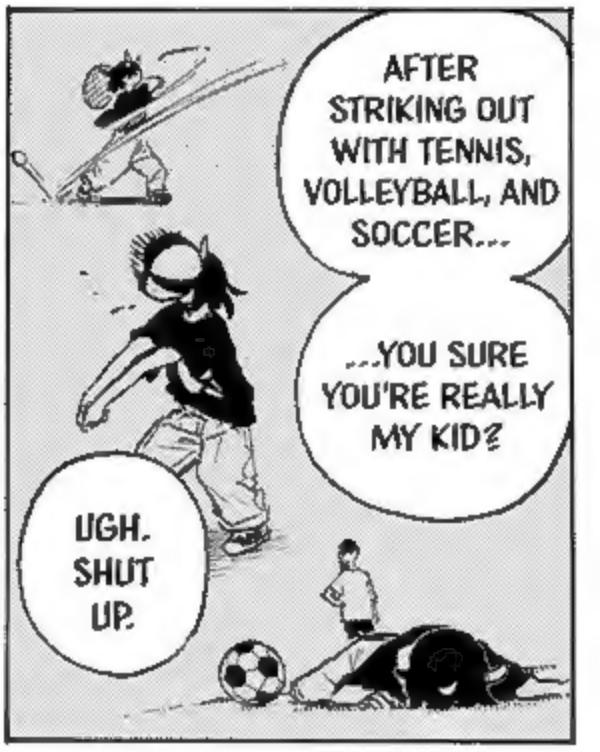
TRANSLATION: CALEB COOK LETTERING: KYLA AIKO

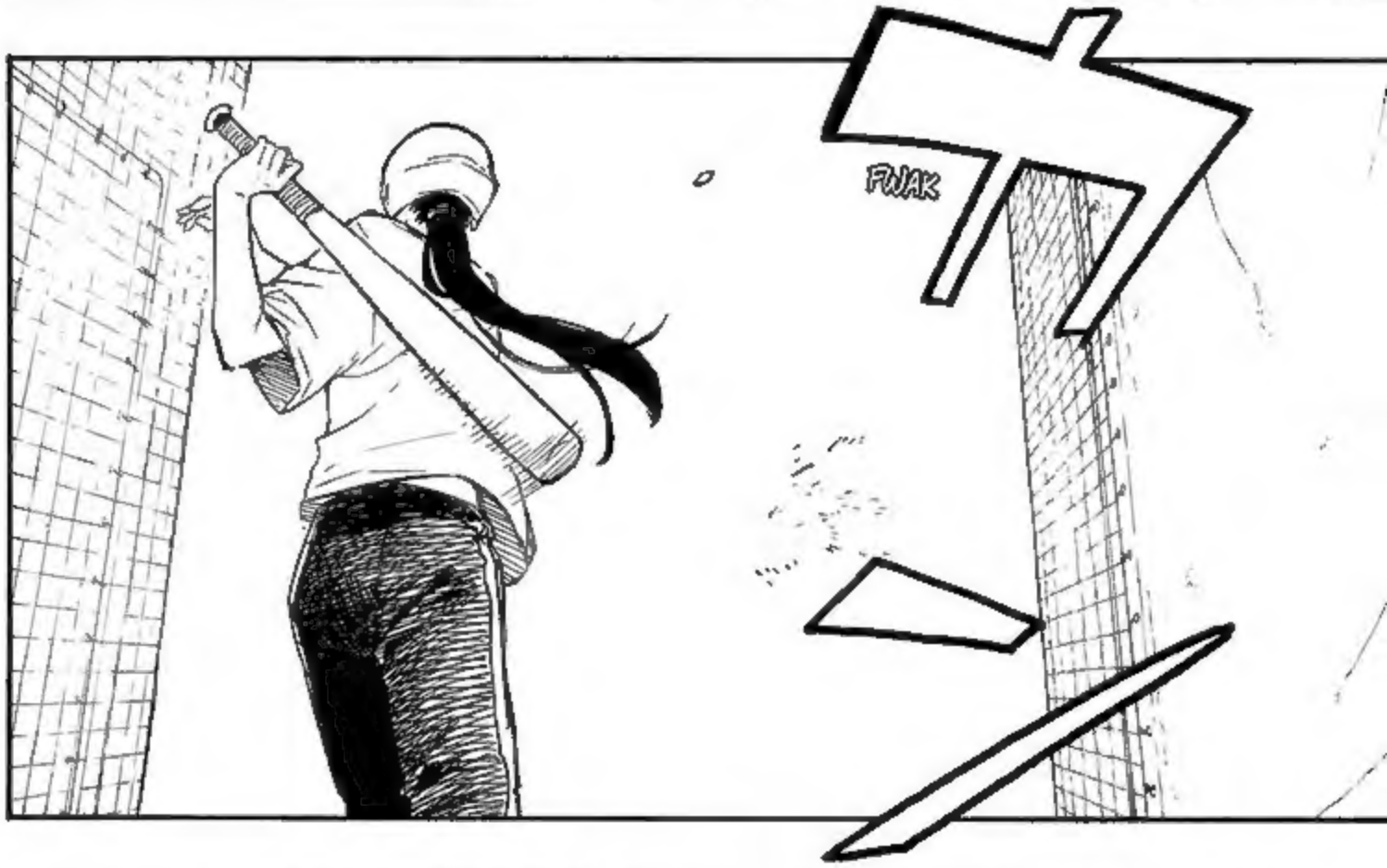
SHUK

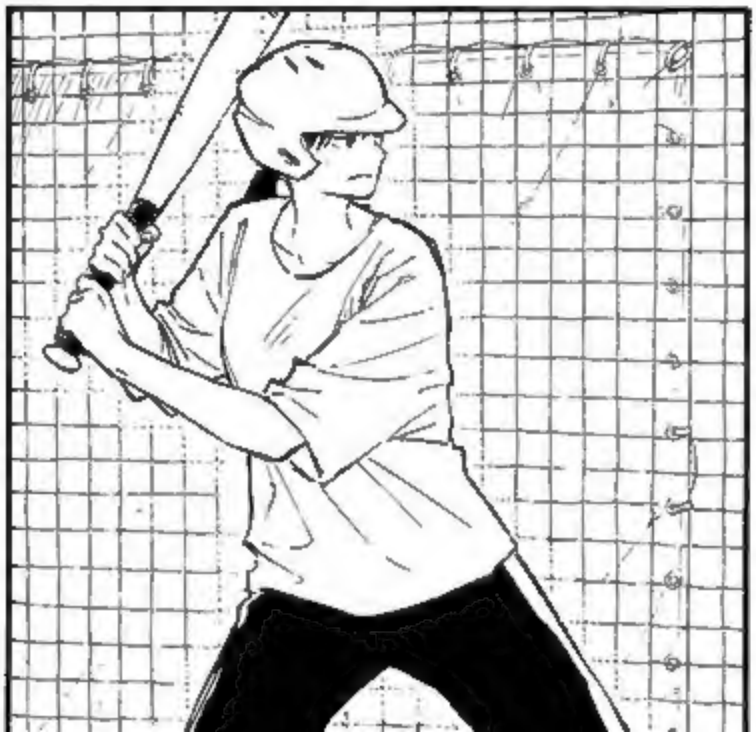
GAH!
WHFF

PSST. HELPS TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.
CAN'T! TOO SCARED!!
CAN'T, CAN'T, CAN'T! WHAT *CAN* YOU DO?

I'M TAGGING IN. LET A PRO SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE.
HOW'S WATCHING A "PRO" GONNA HELP ME?


AFTER STRIKING OUT WITH TENNIS, VOLLEYBALL, AND SOCCER...
...YOU SURE YOU'RE REALLY MY KID?
UGH. SHUT UP.


FWAK



YEESH...

THWAK
KRAK
PHEW.
4
LED Batting
120 km/h
PWF
SMAK
PWF
PWF

I COULD NEVER!!
THAT'S WHAT A 1.000 BATTING AVERAGE LOOKS LIKE!! NOW YOU TRY.
HMPH
HOW'D YOU GET SO SPORTY?!
YOU DON'T GOTTA LOOK SO SMUG ABOUT IT!

YEAH, I NEED A MINUTE TOO.
YOU SURE THIS IS EVEN HELPING?
PHEW... THAT WIPED ME OUT. EVEN I CAN'T FIGHT FATHER TIME.
HOW ABOUT A BREATHER?

CUZ IT'S KINDA HARD TO IMAGINE IRL.
MM-HMM.
...A DRAGON CALL DOWN LIGHTNING OR WHATEVER?
ALSO... HAVE YOU EVER ACTUALLY SEEN...

SO YOU REALLY *DIDN'T* GET ALONG, HUH?
JUST ONCE, ACTUALLY. WE HAD A FIGHT— A BIG ONE—AND HE CLAPPED BACK WITH AN ACTUAL THUNDERCLAP.
ANYWAY, I ASKED HIM HOW IT WORKS, AND HE EXPLAINED...
...THAT DRAGONS USE THUNDERCLOUDS TO CALL LIGHTNING.
...THE ELECTRICITY IN THEIR BODIES GETS RELEASED AS LIGHTNING.
THEY FLY AROUND THROUGH THE CLOUDS, AND DURING THOSE LITTLE RAMPAGES...
IT'S A WAY TO VENT THE ELECTRICITY STORED UP INSIDE.
IT GETS STORED UP, HUH?

ANYWAY, TOO MUCH BUILDUP IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH, SO YOU GOTTA LET IT OUT EVERY NOW AND THEN.
WOWIE. WHAT A SWELL TRAIT TO HAVE.
YUP. IT NATURALLY ACCUMULATES IN DRAGONS' BODIES.
THAT MUCH IS BEYOND ME. MAYBE IT'S LIKE WHEN PEOPLE GET A STATIC CHARGE?
UH, BUT WHY?

ACTUALLY, THAT FIRST ACCIDENTAL OUTBURST WASN'T TOTALLY A BAD THING.
?
GROSS. PHRASING, PLEASE.
EXCEPT I CAN'T SOAR THROUGH THE CLOUDS.
RIGHT, WHICH IS WHY IT'S SORT OF BEEN LEAKING OUT OF YOU.

SAY THE RANDOM DISCHARGES STOP BEFORE YOU FIGURE OUT HOW TO RELEASE THE ELECTRICITY ON YOUR OWN.
THAT BUILDUP COULD DO A NUMBER ON YOUR BODY. OR WORSE...
...YOU'RE STILL... IN TROUBLE IF THIS KEEPS UP.
HUP!
THAT RELEASED YOUR BUILDUP. PLUS, NOW WE KNOW IT'S ONE OF THE THINGS YOU INHERITED.
TRUE.

...YOU MIGHT PRODUCE *ACTUAL LIGHTNING.*

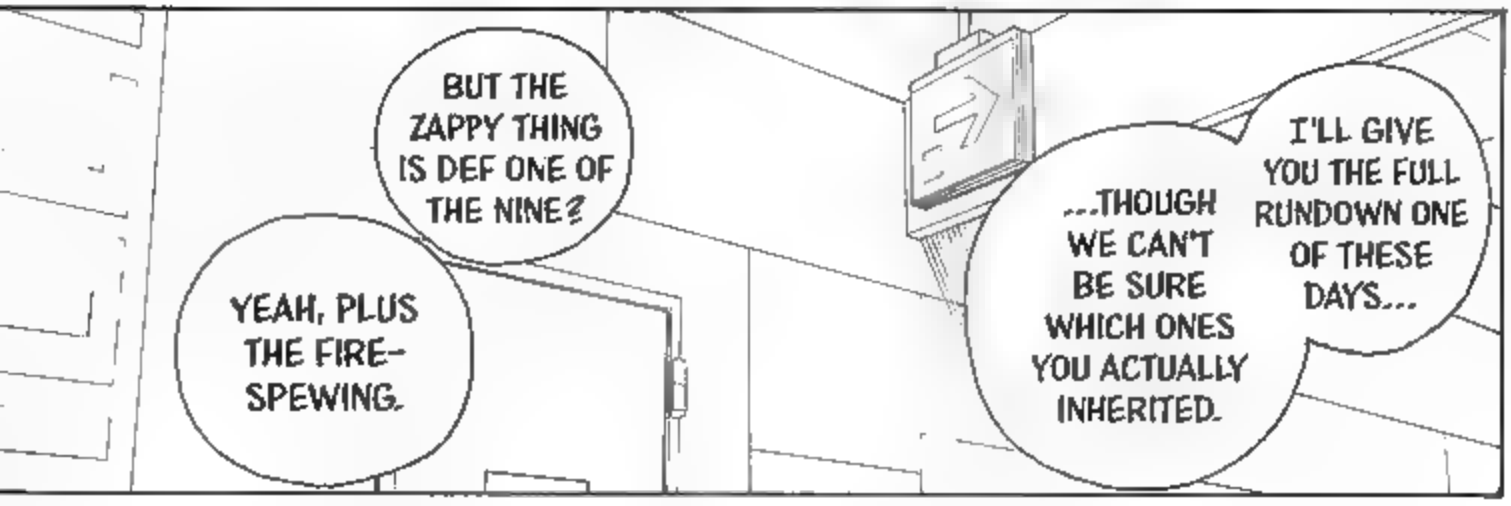
AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE FIRST-EVER DRAGON-HUMAN HYBRID.
IT'S HARD TO BE SURE OF ANYTHING ABOUT YOU, RURI...
I FIGURED, GIVEN THAT WE CAME HERE...

PHEW. MY PIPES COULD USE A DRINK AFTER ALL THAT YAPPING. HOW ABOUT YOU?
UM... AGAIN, HOW IS ANY OF THIS GONNA HELP?
TO BE HONEST, I DUNNO.
UGH.

LISTEN, IT'LL ALL WORK OUT.
BEEP
...AND FIGURE OUT WHAT MAKES THOSE TRAITS TICK.
IN THE MEANTIME, WE'LL BE SURE TO SWEAT THE DETAILS...

YOU'RE PART DRAGON, AFTER ALL.
GULK
WON'T BE EASY THOUGH, CONSIDERING THERE'RE NINE TOTAL.
GLUG GLUG
MM-HMM.
THE FIRST STEP IS TO LET YOUR BODY FIGURE OUT WHAT IT CAN DO.
BECAUSE THOSE DRACONIC TRAITS ARE PART OF THE PACKAGE. THEY'RE WITH YOU FOR LIFE.
NOT THAT I'VE WITNESSED THEM ALL, MYSELF...
TH-THERE'RE WHAT?!
PFFLBT!

SIGH...
I GUESS I COULD'VE ASKED FOR A NUMBER. THAT'S ON ME.
HMM. PROBABLY?
YOU MEAN I GOTTA DEAL...
...WITH NINE FREAKY TRAITS?! YOU SURE I'M GONNA SURVIVE?


BUT THE ZAPPY THING IS DEF ONE OF THE NINE?
YEAH, PLUS THE FIRE-SPEWING.
...THOUGH WE CAN'T BE SURE WHICH ONES YOU ACTUALLY INHERITED.
I'LL GIVE YOU THE FULL RUNDOWN ONE OF THESE DAYS...

I WAS THINKING I'D HAVE HIM LOOK AFTER YOU FOR A LITTLE WHILE ONCE THE TRAITS MANIFESTED.
ACTUALLY, THAT WAS ALWAYS THE PLAN.
EW! NO THANKS!!
BUT THEN, YOUR TEACHERS AT SCHOOL WERE WILLING TO HELP, SO...
...I CAN SHIP YOU OFF TO YOUR DAD, AND YOU CAN LIVE AS A DRAGON.
YOU'LL BE FINE. BUT WORST CASE...
IS A HUMAN LIFE EVEN GONNA BE AN OPTION FOR ME?

DON'T GET ME WRONG— I LIKE OUR LIFE.
AND IF THIS REGULAR OL' LIFESTYLE WORKS OUT, MORE POWER TO YOU.
HARD TIMES OR NOT.
THAT'S NEWS TO ME. LIKE EVERY-THING ELSE.

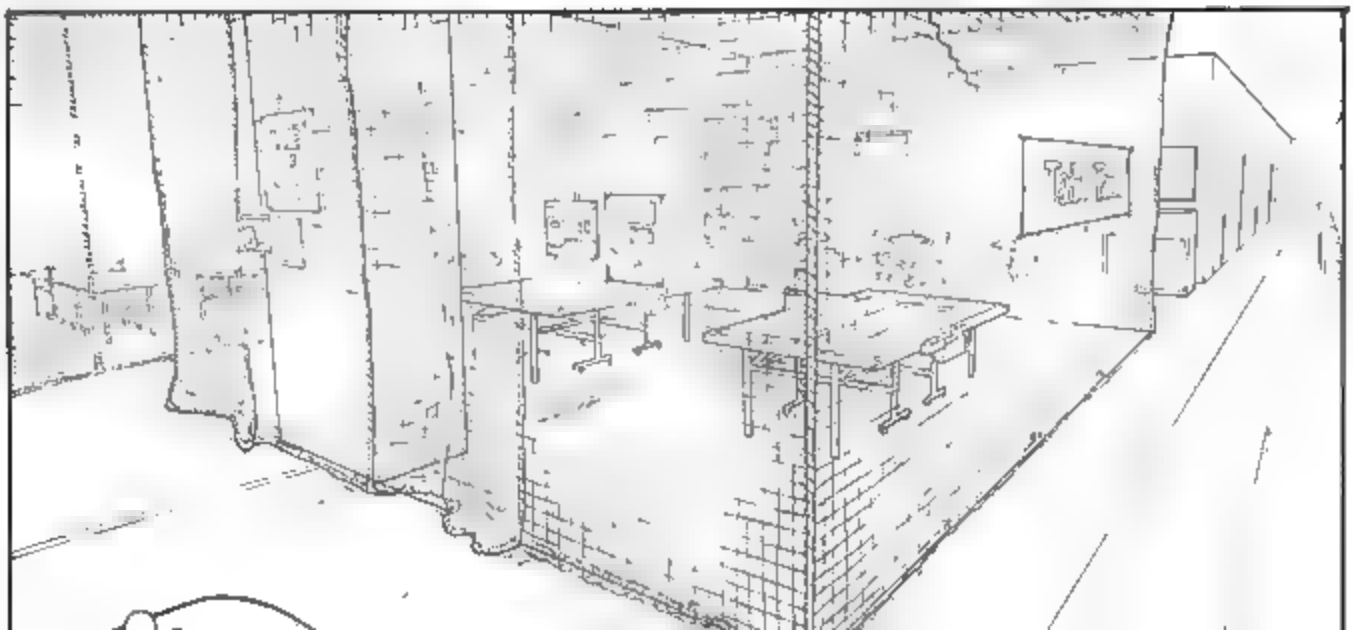
UM?
CHOOSE A BIO-DAD I'VE NEVER EVEN MET? MISS ME WITH THAT.
AH HA HA, THAT'S MY BABY GIRL.
DRAGONS ARE A TON OF FUN.
BUT HEY, DON'T LET ME STOP YOU FROM PICKING YOUR DAD.

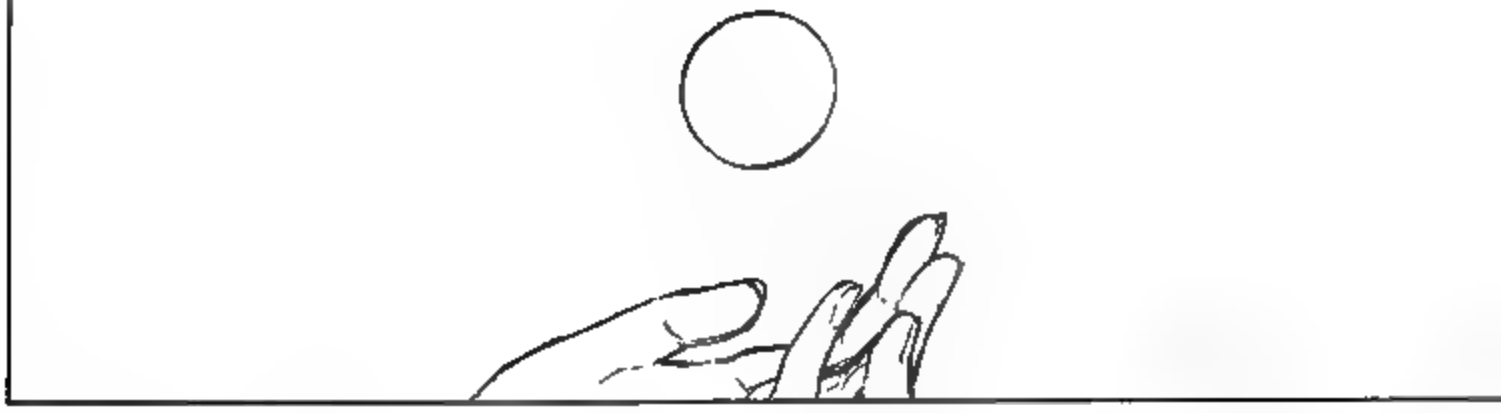
RIGHT...
CUZ A HUMAN LIFE IS ALL I KNOW.
LOOK, I'LL PUT IN THE WORK...
...TO ACT AS NORMAL AS POSSIBLE.

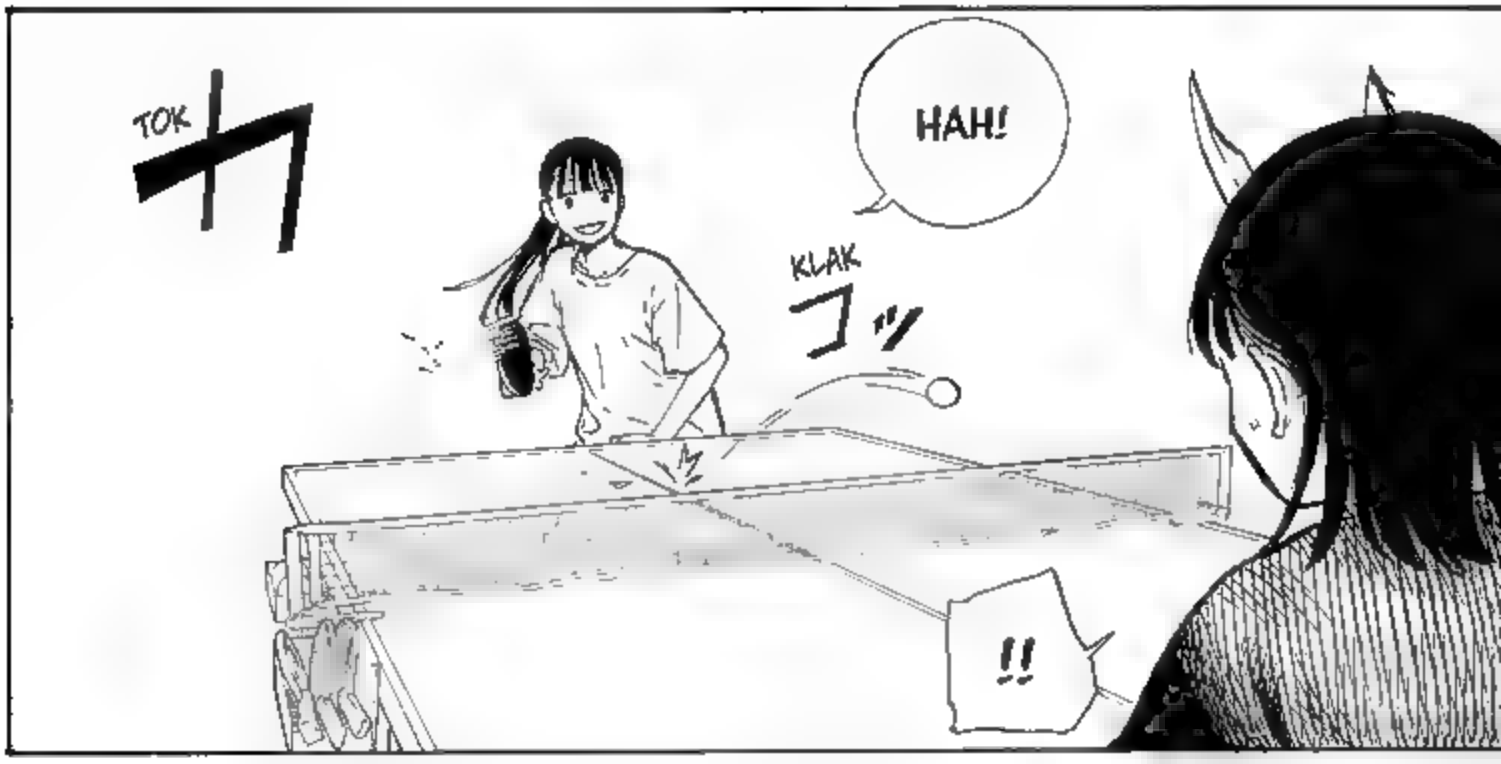
NAW, WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OBVIOUS CHANGES IN YOU YET.
CHANGES...? LIKE WHAT?
AT THIS PLACE? AREN'T WE ALL SPORTSED OUT?
SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

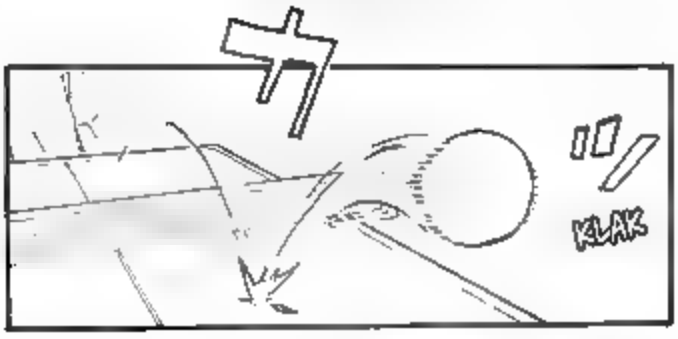
!!

WHAT NOW...?
HERE WE GO!
OOH!!



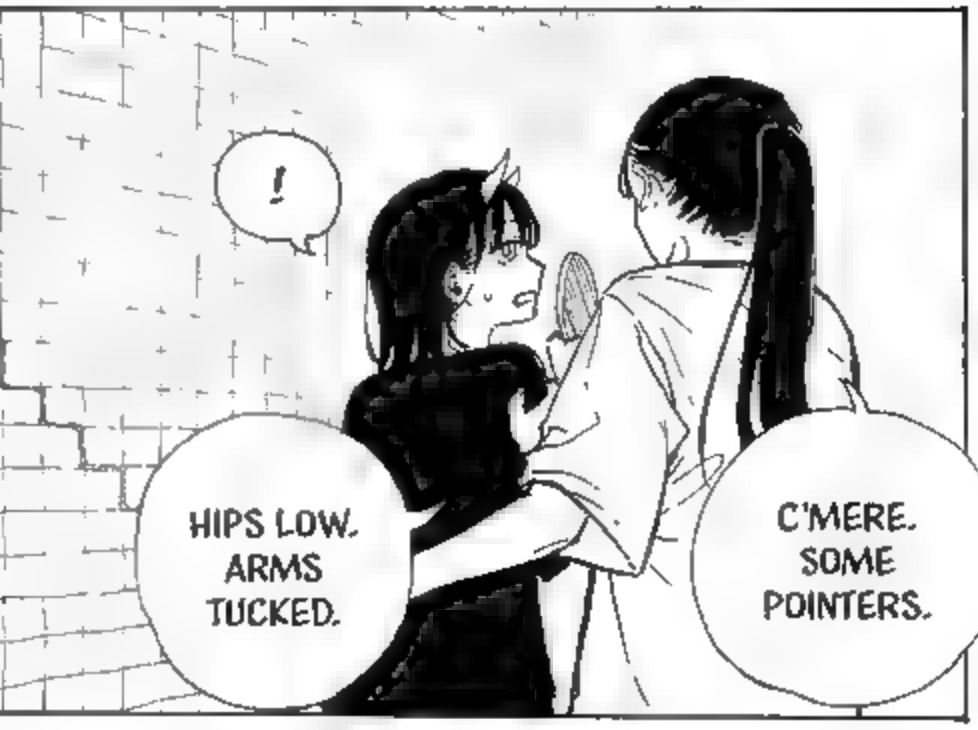



TOK
HAH!
KLAK
!!


KLAK

!!

SHWAK
FWAH!
OKAY. YOU DEFINITELY HIT IT.


!
HIPS LOW. ARMS TUCKED.
C'MERE. SOME POINTERS.

FULL POWER AIN'T THE WAY.
WAY OFF THE MARK THOUGH...

YOU SHOULDN'T BE *SMACKING* IT. JUST SORT OF BOUNCING IT BACK.
LIKE THIS.
LEAN FORWARD A LITTLE...
...AND SWING UP AT AN ANGLE USING YOUR HIPS.

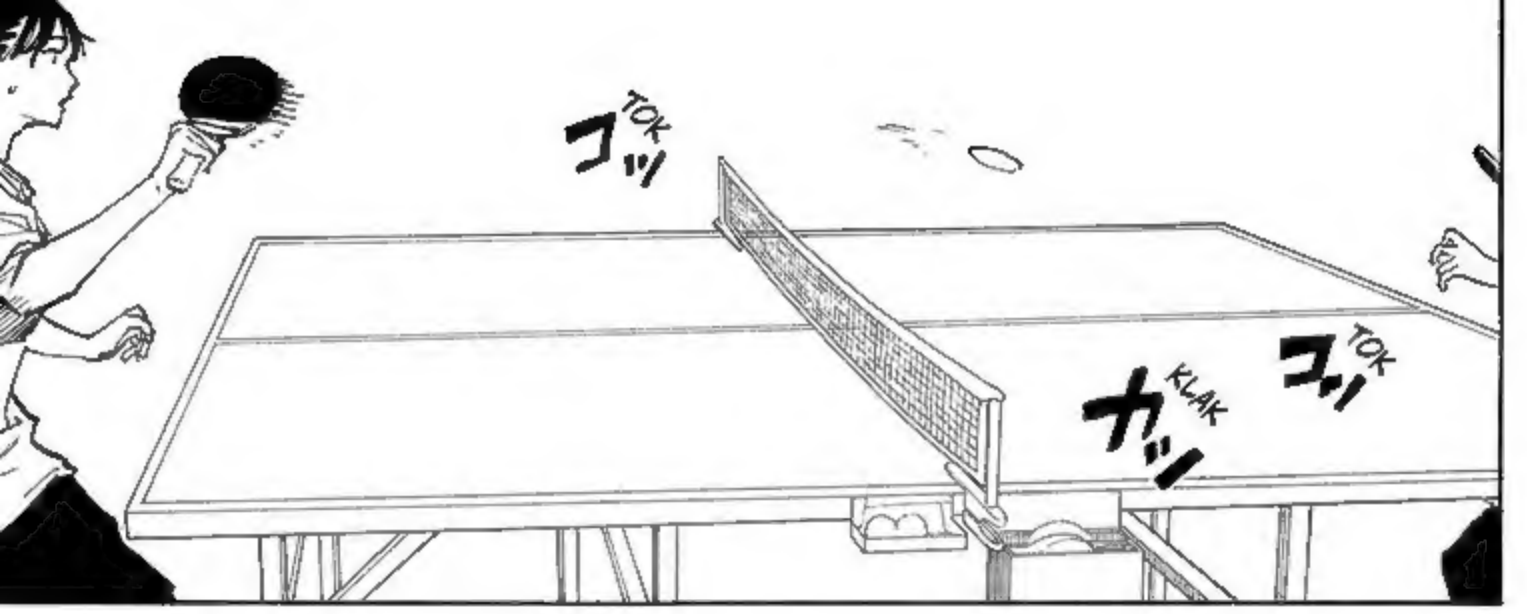
NOTHING TO IT.
KLAK
KLAK

TOK

NOW JUST DO THAT SAME MOVE WHEN THE BALL'S COMING AT YOU.
SEE?
NOT SO TRICKY, HUH?
OHH...

TAKE TWO!
COULD BE FUN. DON'T GOTTA WORRY ABOUT MY HORNS AT LEAST.
OKAY...

EVEN *YOU* CAN MANAGE THIS ONE.


TOK
TOK
KLAK

TOK
HEY, MAYBE YOU REALLY ARE MY KID AFTER ALL.
GOT A KNACK FOR IT ALREADY? THAT WAS QUICK!

TOK
!!
EYE ON THE BALL NOW.

LET'S JUST RALLY BACK AND FORTH FOR A WHILE.

AH HA HA!! YOU FINALLY IN THE ZONE, HUH?
TOK

TOK
QUIT TALKING! YOU'RE THROWING ME OFF!!

OKAY, SO, AGAIN, WHY'RE WE HERE?
AREN'T THERE A BUNCH OF OTHER WAYS TO GET EXERCISE?
HM?

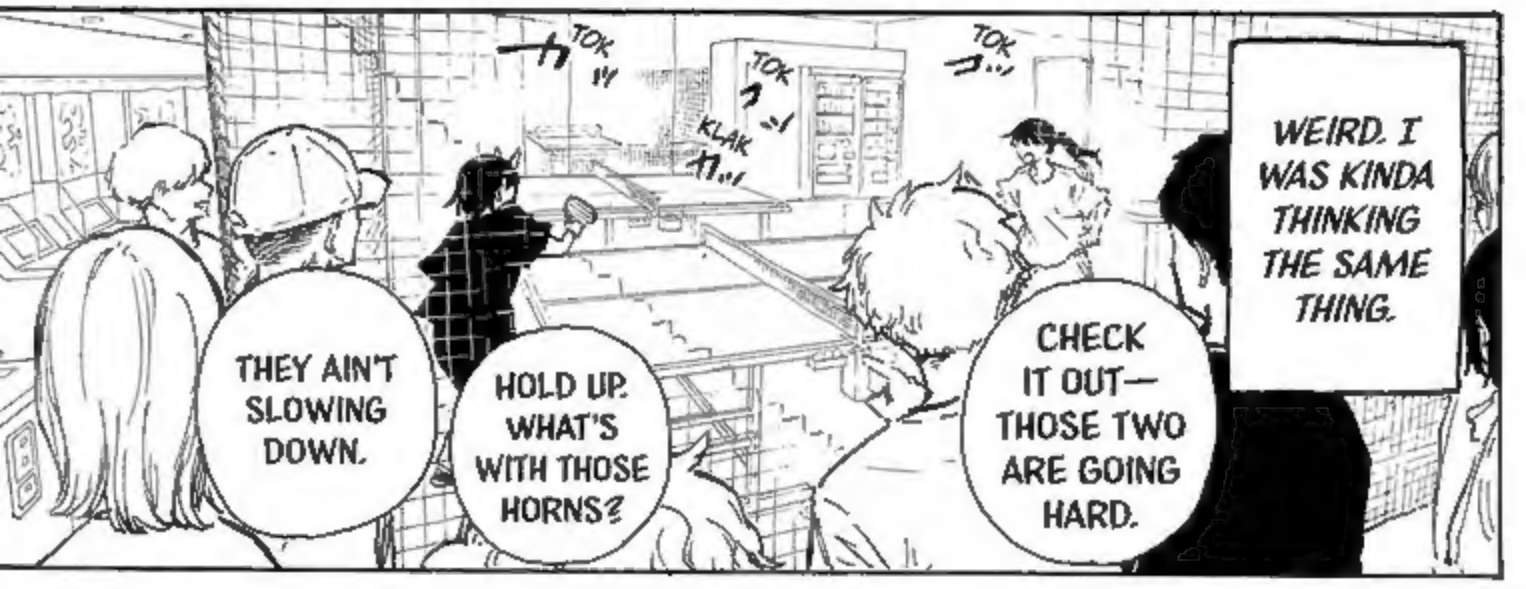
I LOVE SPENDING TIME WITH YOU, RURI.

HUH?
BECAUSE I WANTED US TO HANG OUT.

RIGHT. WELL...
ACK!

MY SCHEDULE BARELY LEFT ME WITH ANY TIME FOR YOU...
...AND YOU WERE BUSY STUDYING.
BUT WE NEVER REALLY GOT TO DO IT LIKE THIS.

SO THAT'S HER ANGLE.
SORRY 'BOUT THAT!
I'M GLAD WE'VE FOUND MORE US TIME LATELY.
BUT *THIS* IS JUST MY HOBBY.


TOK
TOK
KLAK
TOK
THEY AIN'T SLOWING DOWN.
HOLD UP. WHAT'S WITH THOSE HORNS?
CHECK IT OUT— THOSE TWO ARE GOING HARD.
WEIRD. I WAS KINDA THINKING THE SAME THING.

OH? SURE IS...
HUH?
?
WAIT, ISN'T THAT AOKI?
HUH?
To be continued!